SLOSS RED ORE MINE NO. 2
Red Mountain Iron Ore Mining-
Birmingham Industrial District
East of 30th St. Bessemer
Birmingham vic
Jefferson County
Alabama

HAER No. AL-26

PHOTOGRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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Location:	USGS Quad: Bessemer, UTM: 506720/360601, on Red Mountain, Bessemer, Jefferson County, Alabama. Take Dartmouth Avenue to 30th Street and turn left, go to base of Red Mountain beyond residential neighborhood.
Date of Construction:	c. 1882
Period of Significance:	1890s-1960s
Builder/ Architect/ Engineer:	Multiple, Sloss Furnace Co.
Ownership:	Jim Walter
Project Information:	This report is based upon written documentaion donated by the Birmingham Historical Society, reformatted to HABS/HAER guidelines.
Significance:	As one of the Sloss City Furnaces' major sources of red ore, the site has significance as an element in the "straight line production" model. The portal offers insight into the design and construction elements of ore mining openings, and the hoist may be the only surviving example of an ore mine hoist in the Birmingham District. The hoist house contains interesting architectural features but its ground plan is unusual, possibly reflecting a functional adaptation to the terrain and layout of the mining operation.

DESCRIPTION

The Sloss No. 2 Mine covers about 40 acres along the slope and crest of Red Mountain. It consists of a mine portal (inscribed SSS&I Co., SLOSS No. 2), a few other mine openings, a hoisting engine house and hoist, a cemetery, a tailings pile and numerous foundation remnants. The mine portal is well preserved exhibiting some decorative features in addition to its functional elements. The hoist house is moderately well preserved. Its brick walls, reinforced concrete foundations and steel frame ceiling elements are sound although the wood and corrugated steel roof has been partially burned and is badly rusted. The mine hoist has a drum that is about 9-feet in diameter and 6-feet wide. It has the partial remnants of an electric and gear box still in place but appears to have been steam powered originally. The major portion of the hoist house may date to c. 1894, but additions appear to have been made. The cemetery contains graves ranging from the late 19th century through the 1950s. The field survey did not determine the fact, but it is possible that the cemetery is associated with the archaeological remains of an early mine camp. While the cemetery and most structural remains are located on the northwest side of Red Mountain, the tailings pile is located just slightly over the crest of the Mountain on the Shades Valley side. It rises above the crest of the mountain offering a striking panorama of both Shades Valley and portions of Jones Valley.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Sloss No. 2 was opened in 1890. By 1894, the mine had reached a depth of 850 feet and by 1908 it had penetrated to a depth of 1,330 feet. The mine was modernized around 1900 and a Gates crusher, Corliss air compressors and other new equipment installed.

Sloss Nos. 1 and 2 became the primary producers for the Sloss Furnaces by the turn of the century. Their ore was superior to that mined at Ruffner, at times grading so high in carbonates that it was "self fluxing" and did not require the addition of fluxing stone. Its superiority was vividly illustrated in 1910 when the mine was flooded and the company had to depend entirely on red ore from Ruffner. During that period the cost of making pig iron with Ruffner ore increased about $1.50 per ton. Sloss Nos. 1 and 2 were closed sometime during the late 1950s or early 1960s.

The Sloss No. 2 mine site has changed little since it was abandoned in the early 1960s. The hills around the site are covered with trees and undergrowth that obscure many of the foundation remnants and other features.

The site appears to be threatened by vandalism and possible efforts to reclaim the marginal ore that is contained in the tailings pile. An old road through the site has recently been reworked, possibly to provide access to the tailings pile. Vandals using cutting torches have recently removed some steel beams and other metal from the hoist house, and someone started a fire on the ground floor of the hoist house.

Sources Consulted

Department of the Interior. Iron Ores, Fuels and Fluxes of the Birmingham District, Alabama, by Ernest F. Burchard, Charles Butts and Edwin C. Eckel, Geological Survey, (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1910): 405-410; Alabama.

Report on the Valley Regions of Alabama, by Robert W.McCalley, Special Report No. 9, Part 2, Geological Survey, (Montgomery: Roemer Printing Co., 1897); 70-71; Alabama.

Annual Statistical Report, 1942-1943. Dept. of Industrial Relations, Division of Safety and Inspection, (Wetumpka, Ala.: Wetumpka Printing Co., 1944): 26. "President's Report, November 30, 1900," Sloss Papers, Dept. of Archives, Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, Alabama. [Footnote 1]

"The Sloss-Sheffield Company Passes a Dividend," Iron Age, 86 (November 1910): 1153. [Footnote 2]

Bergstresser Inventory, 1990

The Birmingham District Files, Birmingham Historical Society Collection